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Sulya, Panje, Belláre and Yélusávira. With a force of 3,000 Coorgs Lingarája invaded Wynád and erected a wooden fort at Kalpavati, by means of which and a force of 2000 men he kept the district for five years.

When Appájirája died in 1775, Lingarája himself succeeded to the throne, setting aside the claims of his two nephews, whom, however, he brought up together with his own son Vírarája Vodeya. In 1779 the Wynád garrison was obliged to retire, being short of provisions and closely pressed by the Rájah of Kóte. Upon this disagreeable news, Lingarája despatched a body of 2000 Coorgs, headed by his two nephews. On the way this force was intercepted by the Rájah of Kóte and defeated; amongst the slain was one of the princes and the other, being taken prisoner, was soon after put to death.

B. COORG UNDER DODDA-VÍRARÁJENDRA VODEYA.

1780—1807.

a. Vírarájendra in Mysore captivity.

Lingarája died in the beginning of 1780. His sons, Vírarájendra Vodeya and Lingarája were of tender age, the eldest being only about 16. Hyder, conceiving it a favourable moment to complete the spoliation, he had so successfully begun, assumed entire possession of Coorg, under the pretence of being guardian to the princes until they would come of age. Meanwhile they were to reside in the fort of Gartru. A Brahmin, Subarasaya, formerly Káranika (Treasurer) of the Coorg Rájah was appointed Commissioner of Coorg by the usurper, and a Mussulman garrison held Mercara fort, which Hyder caused to be strengthened.

Enraged at the abduction of their princes from their country and the Brahmin's lording it over them, the Coorgs broke out in open rebellion in June 1782. On hearing that

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Hyder had marched for the Carnatic, to oppose the British army under Sir Eyre Coote, they drove the Mussulmans out of the country and proclaimed their independance.

The death of Hyder prevented an immediate retribution; but Tippu Sultan, his son, was fully determined on the reconquest of Coorg. He first sent the family of the Coorg Rájahs to Periapatna and after having treacherously seized General Mathews and his officers at Nuggur and reduced Mangalore in 1784, he marched through Coorg on his way to Seringapatam, when he compounded matters with the insurgents. On this occasion, according to Col. Wilk's account, Tippu is said to have harangued the Coorgs on the subject of their moral and political sins in the following words: "If six brothers dwell together in one house, and the elder brother marries, his wife becomes equally the wife of the other five, and the intercourse so far from being disgraceful, is familiarly considered as a national rite; not a man in the country knows his father, and the ascendancy of women and bastardy of your children, is your common attribute. From the period of my father's conquest of the country, you have rebelled seven times and caused the death of thousands of our troops; I forgive you once more; but if rebellion be ever repeated, I have made a vow to God, to honour every man of the country with Islam; I will make you aliens of your home and establish you in a distant land, and thus at once extinguish rebellion and plurality of husbands and initiate you in the more honorable practice of Islam!" But scarcely had Tippu left, when the Coorgs, stirred by the apprehension of incurring his vengeance, again took up arms, and repossessed themselves of their native hills in 1785.

To suppress this revolt, Tippu despatched a force of 15,000 men under Janulabdin. At Ulagulli, in Múdugerinád, the Mussulmans were opposed by a body of 4,000 Coorgs, who after a sharp encounter forced them to retire to Bettada-

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pur with the loss of their baggage. The ill success of his general induced Tippu, to take the command in person, and having collected another army, he entered Coorg by the same route and reached Mercara with but little loss, where he effected an amicable settlement. Under pretence of peaceful intentions and conciliatory measures, Tippu allured most of the Coorgs to Talekávéri (in 1785), and when they felt most secure, he seized them suddenly with their families about 85,000 souls, sent them to Scringapatam and, carrying out his former threat, had them forcibly circumcised. On the same auspicious day, when he added so great a number to Islam, he assumed the royal dignity and declared himself independent of Delhi.

Into depopulated Coorg he sent Mussulman landlords and gave to them the lands and slaves of the exiles, besides a supply of labourers from Adwáni in the Bellary district and armed them with a degree of cruel proscription:

"The country is given to you in Jaghir, improve it and be happy; the extermination of those mountaineers being determined on, you are required as an imperious duty, to search for and to slay all who may have escaped our just vengeance; their wives and children will become your slaves." A Brahmin Nágappaya, a nephew of Subarasaya, was charged with the government of Coorg; but was soon convicted of embezzlement and condemned to the gallows, when he fled to the Kóte Rájah in Malabar.

b. Vírarájendra at liberty.

Conflicts with Kóte and Mysore.

Such was the state of affairs, when in December 1788 Vírarájendra (also written Vírarája) Vodeya, accompanied by his wife and his two brothers, Lingarája and Appáji, the principal survivors of the Coorg family, effected his escape

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to a Coorg, of the name of Mallappa, when she was about nine years old. The Rájah, who was possessed of immense wealth, gave to her one lac of pagodas in gold and jewels, and costly shawls and dresses in profusion. The death of his favourite wife had not only rendered him unhappy, but had soured his temper, and, to judge from Coorg analogy, he could scarcely avoid the cruel suspicion, that some traitors had conspired against the life of Mahádévaráni and destroyed her by charms and incantations. He himself began to live in dread of secret enemies. No doubt, but he had such, for he detested Hindus in general and Coorgs in particular. He had killed hundreds of his own people on some idle suspicion or malicious denunciation, or on the mere impluse of a sudden gust of passion. But now his cruelty and his dark fears rose higher and higher. At last matters came to a crisis.

The Rájah had surrounded himself with an African bodyguard, and eunuchs from Mysore had charge of his Harem. But the guards of the palace and all the military officers with very few exceptions were Coorgs. No longer able to bear the iron yoke, they conspired against the Rájah's life. The day and the hour were fixed. All the Coorg guards, who held the gates of the fort and the entrances of the palace, being of one accord, his destruction seemed to be certain. But a few minutes before the signal was given, the secret was betrayed to Vírarája. He was roused by the impending danger. With great presence of mind he imitated Hyder Ali, who had in similar circumstances gained time, by placing a bundle of clothes on his bed covered with a blanket. The Coorgs rushed in and cut the form, which they mistook for the sleeping Rájah, in pieces. Next moment they discovered, that the Rájah had fled, that he had, at the last moment, been warned. They were paralyzed. Vírarája in the mean time had run out and summoned his Africans. The Fort gates were shut. Some three hundred Coorgs had assembled

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in the palace yard. The Africans received orders to cut them down to a man. The Rájah himself took his post at a window and fired upon the terror stricken conspirators. They allowed themselves to be slaughtered like sheep. Vírarája himself boasted of having shot twenty-five of them. The rest fell without resistance, under the swords of the Siddis, who waded ankle deep in blood. An old Jemadar, who had been eyewitness of the dreadful scene, said, that the blood ran out of the palace yard as the rain in a heavy monsoon day. Three-hundred Coorgs, by his account, fell that morning in front of the palace. Coorg tradition says eight-hundred. Both accounts are probably correct, for Vírarája would, as a matter of course, destroy many of the families of the fallen conspirators, ordering the men to be killed and distributing the women among the slaves. Such was Coorg Rájah fashion. This massacre took place in the end of 1807 or early in 1808. The Rájah reported his suppression of a dangerous conspiracy to the Governor of Madras and the Governor General. The Rájah's account was not credited at Madras. It was rather thought, that he had acted on some sudden impulse of passion; for his cruelty and sanguinary temper were sufficiently known. Yet the Government did not consider it their duty to interfere, partly from regard to their faithful ally, partly from ignorance of the extent of the fearful slaughter.

On the 7th October 1807 Vírarájendra addressed a long letter to the Governor General, Lord Minto. He informed him of the death of his principal Ráni, who had left him four daughters and of his will regarding the succession after his death, as already stated. Vírarájendra appears to have expected, perhaps longed for, his own death, after the loss of his beloved wife. A deep melancholy settled upon him, from which he was roused from time to time by rumours of conspiracies and dreams of rebellion among his treacherous subjects, when he would start like a lion from his lair and kill

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and tear whatever objects first met his fury, until he was satiated with blood and his paroxysm subsided. Dr. Ingledew, who was sent early in 1809 by Mr. Cole, the Resident in Mysore, to attend upon the Rájah, heard some vague rumours of several thousand people having been destroyed "after the late disturbances," that is, the conspiracy above related. Vírarájendra had long to wait for an answer from the Governor General to his petition of October 1807. He had requested, that the concurrence of the Governor General with his settlement of the succession might be registered in the books of the Supreme Government and a copy sent him of the registry, which he would wear about his body as an amulet.

During the year 1808 fits of madness seized the unfortunate Rájah. They rarely passed without some victims of his incontrollable fury, falling by his bullet or under the knives of his African executioners. Some time in October or November 1808 Vírarája was seized with forebodings of his own death and terrible fears for the safety of his daughters in case of his decease before the Governor General had concurred in his plan of securing to Dévammáji the throne of Coorg, and before his sanction insured her succession and, it might be, the preservation of her life. His melancholy warned him of his approaching death. And if he was carried off on a sudden, who would be the friend and guardian of his daughter? Appáji, his proud brother, who had never loved him, and who had long kept sullenly at a distance, or even the dull mean-spirited Lingarája might covet the wealth and power of the throne, murder the helpless children and seize the great prize. But no! He was yet alive and omnipotent in Coorg, he could yet defend his beloved Dévammáji and her sisters. The executioners are called. A party is despatched to Appagalla, a second party to Háleri, to bring the heads of the brothers, Appáji and Lingarája. They prostrate themselves and depart

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farmers were laid under tribute by the money changers. One of the four Devána, the above named Laksminárayana, a Brahmin, who was displeased with the ascendancy of his Coorg brother-Devána, made political capital out of the ill-feeling of the Gaudas. A brother of his at Sulya, in the low country, was in league with some rich and influential men of the malcontent Gaudas and he likewise entertained some intrigues with Abhrambára. The insurgents assembled at Sulya. They were a mere rabble, but they made a successful attack at Puttur on the Collector of Mangalore and two Companies of sepoys. A party of the rebels, whose courage and numbers increased after their unexpected success, advanced to Mangalore, opened the Jail and with the assistance of the prison fraternity, burnt and looted the Kacheri and some Civilians' houses, situated on the hills, overlooking the town. All the Europeans of the station were seized with a panic. The Civilians who fled on board a ship, bound for Cannanore, were spectators of the conflagration of their houses and thought the whole country was in arms. The Commanding Officer held a council of war and, deeming discretion the better part of valour, would have embarked the garrison, consisting of a Regiment, much weakened it is true, by the defeated detachment of several Companies, had boats been procurable, and ran away before a few hundred Gaudas, if so many, and the rabble of the Jail! Troops were immediately sent from Cannanore and Bombay; but when they arrived, they found nobody to fight with. The Mangalore garrison recovered their presence of mind and had no difficulty in maintaining their ground and restoring order. 175*

Though this was altogether a Gauda-affair, a rise was also planned amongst the Coorgs at Nálkanád and Beppunád and amongst the Badagas in the Panje, Bellári and Subramanya districts and the northern parts of Coorg, inhabited by the late Rájah's trusted and favored Sivácháries. Also the 175* 648* 669 ●

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175 late Deván, Kunta Basava's relatives, connections and ever
648 ready tools were there. Formal proclamations were issued in
669 the name of that mysterious personage, Abhrambára, who seemed to be everywhere and nowhere. The Coorgs and other inhabitants of the country were summoned to the service of the great prince of the Haléri house, who was about to take possession of his inheritance. A number of Coorgs about Talakávéri and Nálkanád believed the proclamations to which the Rájah's seal was attached and the assurances of the messengers who carried them. They took up arms and went down to the Head-quarters at Sulya. Abhrambára's letters patent were carried to Beppunád. The Coorgs there, officials and others, were taken by surprise, not knowing what to believe and unable to discern the safer side, they hesitated. After a day or two, a deputation from Vírájpet went to Mercara, to see the Devâns, to report to them and to ask for directions. Capt. Le Hardey, the Superintendent, was on the alert. After consultation with the Devâns, he left Ponappa at Mercara and marched with Bopu and a body of troops in the direction of Sulya as far as Sampáji, whither the insurgents were expected to move according to Bopu's information. When Capt. Le Hardey, after a long and tedious march, had reached Sampáji at the foot of the Ghats, no rebels were to be seen, and he learnt, that they had moved towards the Bisli-ghat and North Coorg. It was impossible to follow the insurgents through a tract of forest hills, difficult of passage even for travellers. He returned, therefore, to Mercara and marched to the supposed rendezvous of the rebels through the upper districts of Coorg. When he arrived there, still accompanied by Bopu, no insurgents were to be seen, and intelligence now reached his camp, that the enemy was at Sampáji. He forthwith marched to Sampáji by way of Kadamakall. Again no rebels. The Superintendent began to doubt the fidelity of his Devân. On his return to Mercara he was told by the

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other Devân Ponappa, who seems to have borne Bopu a grudge, that information had been received in the mean time of several of Bopu's relatives having joined the insurgents. Capt. Le Hardey's suspicions were thus confirmed. He called Bopu and charged him straight with treachery. "Go down to your friends, the rebels; be an open enemy; go, and I will come after you; and, if I catch you, you shall be hung." Bopu, who was as faithful a servant of the Company as his friend Ponappa, was terribly alarmed. Appearances were certainly against him; yet he was innocent. But how was he to gain the confidence of the Chief which he had evidently lost? The man broke out into tears, and protested his fidelity with the eloquence of despair. "Do you stay, Capt. Le Hardey," he said, "and let me quell this miserable rebellion. If you give me liberty to act according to circumstances, and take all responsibility upon yourself, I will set out immediately and bring you the ringleaders alive or dead." Capt. Le Hardey felt, that the man was true and permitted him to do as he pleased. The Coorgs from Beppunâd and other districts had in the mean time collected at Mercara. A party of some sixty men was despatched to the north under Subadar Appachanna the present (1870) Head Sheristadar. Bopu, with another troop marched straight down to Sampâji. Two "Lictors" of his own fashion preceded the "Coorg Consul," viz. two coolies, each of them carrying a load of fresh cut sticks. The Devân evidently intended to give the rebels a licking in the literal sense of the word. His best Nâlkanâd friends gathered around him; three of them marched a little in advance of the Devân to scour the way before him; for Chetty Kudiya, who had been the late Râjah's shooting master and great favourite, a man of the Male-Kudiya tribe, who could hit, it was said, the eye of a flying bird, had sworn to shoot Bopu dead the moment he saw him. The party had not proceeded further than the "Râjah's Seat" and were just descending the

175 * 648 * 669 ●

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175 Ghat, when they met two unlucky wights, a former Subadar, 648 Muddaya and a late Párpadyagára, Appaya. They were well 669 known to Bopu. They had failed to give him information of the insurrection; they must have known things and had they sent him a message in due time, it would have saved him the danger of utter disgrace and ruin, from which he had barely escaped. He, therefore, ordered some of his followers to seize the fellows and others to take out a fresh stick for each and give them a good blow up. The two unfortunates, at once seized by rude hands and stripped of their coats, demanded explanations; they were answered by blows. They protested their innocence, though no charge had been brought against them. Bopu did not stop to expostulate. Blows were the answer. They cried for mercy; fresh blows followed. After a while they were left half dead on the ground and Bopu marched on. Half way down the Sampáji pass, he met with a party of Nálkanád Coorgs, men of his own acquaintance; they were armed, but dared not fight the Deván; he at once ordered them all to be seized by his men, who were much more numerous and administered a severe castigation to all except one, who escaped by telling all he knew about the movements of the insurgents. Bopu went on gloriously. He did redeem the promise given to Capt. Le Hardey. The Subadar of Nálkanád had been drawn into this foolish affair. Bopu sent him word and then had a meeting with him, when he prevailed on him, without difficulty to withdraw from the rebels and to return to the allegiance he had sworn to the Company. The loss of so influential a man was a great blow and discouragement to the petty insurrection. It was put down with little shedding of blood beyond that which was drawn by the "Lictors" and from that time Coorg has been at peace. The Coorgs were most abundantly praised by [703] Government for their loyalty and in recognition of their services of the recaptured treasure Rs. 20,000 were to be

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divided amongst those employed on the expedition; but they begged, that they might be honored with other distinctions in lieu; consequently they were rewarded with jaghir lands to a great extent and pensions for three generations, with horses, gold and silver medals, and broad cloth, according to their merits, or perhaps to the different degrees of relationship and friendship in which they stood to the Devâns. The "Coorg medal" in gold weighs 7 Tolas without, and 11¼ Tolas with the chain and is two inches in diameter. On one side it represents a Coorg warrior in fighting attitude, and on the other it shows round a wreath which encircles the Coorg-knives—the Picha-Katti and the Odû-Katti—the following inscription in English: "For distinguished conduct and loyalty to the British Government Coorg. April 1837." The same inscription in Canarese is given on the reverse side. During the "Mutiny" in 1857 the Coorgs enjoyed the confidence of the local Government to such a degree, that after the suppression of the Rebellion, General Cubbon, the Chief Commissioner, issued to them the following Notification in English and Canarese, bearing at its head a medallion representing a Coorg in full warrior costume.

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NOTIFICATION.

26*th February* 1861.

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"In consideration of the exalted honour, loyalty and intrepidity, characteristic of this little nation of warriors and in recollection of its conspicuous services in aid of the British Government, it is my pleasing duty to notify hereby, for general information, in virtue of the power vested in me by the Government of India, that the provisions of the Act, commonly called the *Disarming Act* are not applicable to the gallant people of Coorg."

(Signed:) M. CUBBON,
Commissioner.